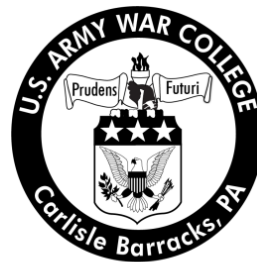


Strategy Research Project International Fellow

Building the Capacities of the Montenegrin Armed Forces

by

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United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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BUILDING THE CAPACITIES OF THE MONTENEGRIN ARMED FORCES

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper provides an overview of the development of the Armed Forces of Montenegro after independence. This research paper reviews the activities and assistance provided by the U.S. Government through various security assistance programs for building Montenegrin armed forces capacities, in order to reach the standards and capacity for interoperability which is required for successful participation in multinational operations. Finally, it offers some conclusions concerning security assistance programs in Montenegro and recommendations for future engagements.

BUILDING THE CAPACITIES OF THE MONTENEGRIN ARMED FORCES

Around the world, even as we pursue a new era of engagement with other nations, we're embracing a broader engagement – new partnerships between societies and citizens, community organizations, business, faith-based groups... In fact, this spirit of partnership is a defining feature of our foreign policy.

—President Barack Obama¹

Building the Institutions

In a 2011 interview with the state newspaper *Pobjeda (Victory)*, Vice Admiral Dragan Samardzic, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Montenegro (AFM) said that “due to the global economic crisis and budget cuts we were unable to implement all our Partnership goals such as modernization and procurement of new equipment. However, we made our most significant progress in the most difficult areas that represent the core of the reform process, such as changes in our heads and way of thinking, and training to work in the international environment.”² This is a revealing comment on Montenegro’s commitment to reform.

Montenegro is the second youngest country recognized by the United Nations. Throughout history, the interests of great powers and large empires were often focused on the area of today's Montenegro, which led to significant battles, wars and human suffering. All of these events made the history of Montenegro richer, and through their trials the people of Montenegro developed a spirit of liberty, pride and chivalry. Montenegro was recognized as the 27th state in Europe at the Berlin Congress in 1878.

From the beginning of the 20th century, Montenegro was part of Yugoslavia, together with other republics – Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. After the armed conflict between the Balkan nations and countries between

1991 and 1995, Montenegro formed a common country with Serbia, named Yugoslavia. The newly formed country, a federation of the remaining two constitutive Republics, was the successor of the former larger Yugoslavia. From 1995 until 2003, the new country faced some big challenges from the international community, which sought to put an end to the humanitarian and refugee crisis in Kosovo. Economic sanctions were imposed that created great poverty, and the NATO countries bombed the combined national territories during that period. Montenegrin senior leaders distanced themselves from officials in Belgrade, but were unable to influence Serbian policy because of the unequal size and power of the two states. Serbia was about ten times bigger than Montenegro.

Recognizing that the Union of Serbia and Montenegro did not represent its interests in a proper way, the Government of Montenegro started to work on regaining full independence. According to the Constitution of Yugoslavia, the independence of a single republic was allowed if a referendum was conducted and if a majority of the population (50 percent) voted in support of independence. Since the Balkan region was still fragile, with only a temporary solution of the Kosovo question in place, the international community, most notably the European Union (EU) and United States of America, didn't support Montenegro in organizing a referendum. In their opinion, a referendum might cause another crisis in the region, this time between Serbia and Montenegro. Influenced by the EU and U.S.A., the Governments of Serbia and Montenegro made an agreement to postpone the referendum in 2003 for three years. In the meantime, according to the agreement, a new country was established called Serbia and Montenegro. Although Montenegro was more effectively represented in the

new country and Serbia had a new, democratic government, after the three year moratorium period ended, the Government of Montenegro decided to conduct the referendum. The international community didn't change its opinion of the Montenegrin referendum, but had to agree since the EU supported the agreement in 2003. The EU's Venice Commission, however, added a new condition before approving the referendum: a qualified majority of 55 percent was required in order to recognize Montenegro as an independent country.

The Montenegrin government accepted that condition and organized the referendum on May 21st 2006. The result was that 55.5 percent of the population voted for independence and 44.5 percent were against the measure. The Montenegrin Assembly declared independence on June 3rd 2006 and soon after that Montenegro was recognized as an independent country by Serbia, its other neighboring countries in the Balkans, the EU countries, the U.S.A. and finally the United Nations (UN) on June 28th 2006.

One of the first decisions of Montenegrin President Mr. Filip Vujanovic after independence was to abolish the conscription system of the Armed Forces of Montenegro (AFM), which immediately began to create new armed forces of volunteers. At the same time, the General Staff of the Armed Forces was established, with Major General Jovan Lakcevic as the first Chief of the General Staff. After the election held in September, Mr. Boro Vucinic was appointed as first Minister of Defense of Montenegro and a Ministry of Defense was re-established, after a 88 year interlude. The new Montenegrin government then had a difficult task. It had to first assess the security challenges and potential threats to the new state, and then to adopt new basic strategic

documents to respond to those threats. After several months of preparations, a new National Security Strategy (NSS) was adopted almost immediately after the referendum. In the NSS, the Montenegrin government identified that Montenegro did not confront security threats from any neighboring country and that a conventional war was not likely to occur in the near future (though it could not be completely excluded, having in mind the fragile security circumstances and history of the region). The main threats that were recognized included: international terrorism and organized crime, smuggling of narcotics or weapons, illegal migration, human trafficking and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.³ On the basis of this identification of the security challenges, risks and threats, the NSS determined the forces and resources required for dealing with these respective challenges. Highly cognizant that the region is still burdened by past events and unsolved problems which may cause instability, the senior leadership of Montenegro also recognized that no single country from the region could deal with those challenges on its own. The main strategic goals for Montenegro in the near future were firmly established. Montenegro would seek to become a full member of both NATO and the European Union (EU).

As a foundation, in October 2007 the Montenegrin assembly adopted the first Constitution. Based on the principles in this Constitution, basic strategic documents regarding the structure of the national security system, including the Law of Armed Forces, National Defense Strategy, Strategic Defense Review, and others were published. Those documents identify civilian control of the armed forces as a main principle in the security sector. In that spirit, the Constitution defined the President as the supreme commander of the armed forces, according to the decisions of the Council

for Security and Defense. The Council consists of the President, Prime Minister and President of the Parliament, who are authorized to make decisions on all strategic matters regarding national defense. Another level of civilian control is the Armed Services Committee; a Parliamentary body that includes all parties which have representatives in the Parliament, and therefore excludes no one.

Montenegro on the Path Toward NATO Membership

As a first step toward integration into NATO, Montenegro received an invitation to join the Partnership for Peace (PfP) during the NATO summit in Riga in November 2006, together with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. President Vujanovic signed the Framework document in December 2006 and from that moment Montenegro has been considered as a full member of the PfP.

Partnership for Peace is a program of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO. It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation.⁴ It was formally launched during the NATO summit in Brussels, Belgium on January 1994, with the purpose of creating trust between NATO members and other countries in Europe and the former Soviet Union. Since the foundation of the PfP 34 countries have signed the Framework document, and 12 of them have already become members of NATO. This program offers an opportunity for a Partner country to choose some of 1,600 activities which would improve the interoperability of its armed forces and improve ties and cooperation between states. Those activities include defense-related matters, defense reform, defense policy and planning, civil-military relations, education and training, military-to-military cooperation and exercises, civil emergency planning and

disaster-response, and cooperation on science and environmental issues. In January 2008 Montenegro started the first two-year cycle of a program called the Individual Partnership Program (IPP), which includes numerous activities in support of its needs and requirements to develop security agencies. Montenegro selected 69 activities from nine areas of cooperation that included such topics as language training, military training, education and doctrine, and defense strategy policy.

Another mechanism within the PfP program is the Planning and Review Process (PARP). PARP is offered on an optional basis to each Partner country. It is designed to provide a basis for identifying and evaluating forces and capabilities which might be available for multinational training, exercises and operations in conjunction with Alliance forces. To that end, a set of partnership goals is prepared in order to establish the measures each Partner needs to develop in order to make its armed forces better able to operate in conjunction with the armed forces of Alliance countries. Through PARP Montenegro strove to promote national transparency in the defense planning process while simultaneously preparing its own forces for successful cooperation with NATO forces. PARP exposes the whole Montenegrin defense system to interoperability requests, and in that way directly influences defense system reform in many areas (training and education, equipment and supply, human resource management - from the lowest to the highest level). The initial PARP evaluation was accepted on March 1st 2008 and considered 32 Partnership goals, of which 26 were assigned to the Ministry of Defense.

During the meeting of NATO member states' ministries of foreign affairs that took place in Brussels in December 2007, Montenegro was encouraged to begin the

Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) process. IPAP is a mechanism that is of the highest importance to Montenegro, for two reasons. IPAP advocates both internal reforms and measures that strengthen relations with other NATO members. It represents a basic prerequisite for achieving a Membership Action Plan – MAP, which is the final stage of the process for attaining full membership in the Alliance. The odds for joining MAP were greatly improved by the successful implementation of the IPAP. IPAP is also very important in the process of public familiarization with NATO's character and activities, and from that point of view, it was fully integrated with the Communication Strategy of the Government of Montenegro, which was adopted by the Government in order to improve public support for joining NATO.

The next important step in the accession process is an Intensified Dialogue (ID), for which Montenegro received an invitation during the NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008. The Montenegrin National Council for PfP, which was formed by a governmental decision in order to supervise the implementation of the documents and activities during the NATO accession process, adopted the Initial document in July 2008, which consists of 6 chapters:

- Montenegro and NATO Enlargement;
- Political Framework;
- Foreign and Security Policy;
- Military and Defense policy,
- Economy;
- Plans Concerning NATO.

The implementation assessment of the process, conducted by different NATO agencies at every stage, showed that Montenegro was very committed to reach the necessary requirements and standards and that visible progress in every area had been achieved. As a result, as a final step toward full membership, during a meeting of NATO member states' ministries of foreign affairs in Brussels in December 2009, Montenegro was invited to begin its Membership Action Plan (MAP). This served to recognize Montenegro's achievements in the area of security sector reform. The first Annual National Plan (ANP) was adopted and accepted by NATO in September 2010, and consisted of 51 Partnership goals (PG). From September 2011 on, Montenegro began the implementation of a second ANP cycle with 51 new PGs, and expects the invitation to become a full NATO member to arrive soon. The main challenges remaining to reach the necessary requirements and standards for full membership are:

- Continued weak public support for joining NATO;
- A low defense budget;
- An inadequate military intelligence structure.

Montenegro has recognized those shortfalls and the government is dedicated to address them in order to reach all the necessary requirements to achieve its national goal of full membership in the Alliance.

Armed Forces Reforms

In order to reach the main strategic goals and to confront the main security challenges, risks and threats, a necessary precondition was to conduct reform of the existing security system and to create new Armed Forces which would be able to deal with the challenges determined by the NSS.

The NSS provided a foundation to establish the Ministry of Defense (MoD). The newly established MOD was formed in November 2006. In the beginning, the main problem was how to fill the Ministry with adequate personnel. The problems were solved in such a way that vital functions were covered by the most experienced personnel (partly with personnel from the General Staff) and by employing young and inexperienced, but highly educated personnel, of whom 60 percent were women. Soon after adoption of the Constitution and NSS, the MoD submitted the Defense Strategy to the Parliament, based on the other strategic documents. The Defense Strategy defined the basic missions of the Armed forces as:

- The defense of Montenegro;
- Support to civilian institutions in case of natural and man-made disasters and other crises, including crises caused by terrorist activities;
- Contributions to building and maintaining peace in the region and world.⁵

In order to build armed forces that will be capable of performing the defined missions, a reform of existing forces was necessary. Before independence, Montenegro and Serbia had common armed forces, which were based on the Eastern European countries' strategies and concepts. For decades, the armed forces in former Yugoslavia were prepared for conventional war, with robust active and reserve force structures. Since the Montenegrin NSS identified very different security challenges, risks and threats, the Montenegrin government decided to create a completely new armed force structure from the ground level. After the referendum, the governments from Montenegro and Serbia agreed to offer an option to commissioned and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). Each individual could choose whether to serve in

either the AFM or Serbian Armed Forces. As a result of that offer, 320 officers and 266 NCOs left Montenegro and went to Serbia, and just 7 officers and 8 NCOs came from Serbia to the AFM. Initially, this created a huge shortage of qualified personnel in the AFM. Other challenges in that period were:

- The limited material and financial capabilities of the newly independent state;
- Inadequate structure and personnel, especially civilians and NCOs working in the Armed Forces of Montenegro;
- Great excesses of ammunition and armament;
- The poor quality and shortages of appropriate infra-structural facilities (buildings and barracks);
- The low level of English competency and other language competency;
- Inadequate maritime and air surveillance systems.

The total size of the Armed Forces of Montenegro is currently authorized as 2,100 personnel, including 360 officers. The MoD concluded that having its own education system for a small number of personnel would be inefficient, so they decided to educate their officers abroad. At this stage of forming the Army, it is crucial to have well trained and educated officers, who will be able to understand trends in modern conflicts and to implement appropriate measures in our country. To that end, through intensive international cooperation, the MoD has started to deal with all challenges with the support of its partners, and with the U.S. Department of Defense as a critical strategic partner. At the same time the MoD continues to develop and adopt other strategic documents in accordance with the NSS, Defense Strategy and Strategic Defense Review, in order to increase its capacity to perform designated missions.

Building Partner Capacities

Where possible, U.S. strategy is to employ indirect approaches—primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces—to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require costly and controversial direct military intervention. In this kind of effort, the capabilities of the United States' allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more so than, the fighting the United States does itself.⁶

The U.S. Government recognizes the importance of Building Partnership Capacities (BPC). The question is not “whether” the U.S. should conduct BPC, but rather with whom, how to design those efforts, which agency is the leading agency and which are supporting agencies for BPC activities. The purpose of the Department of Defense’s engagement with Partners’ Armed Forces is to “build strong and enduring relationships, reinforce others’ capacities both to defend themselves and to work in coalitions, and ensure U.S. access to foreign territories for operational purposes.”⁷ The Department of Defense conducts various activities and programs which will be described in detail further on.

The basis for Building Partnership Capacities is stated in the National Security Strategy and represents an important U.S. national interest; international order with U.S. leadership. “Consistent with the President’s vision, the United States will advance these interests by strengthening our domestic foundation and integrating all elements of national power, engaging abroad on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect.”⁸ In order to reach those goals, the U.S. needs to build broad international coalitions and develop friendly relations and partnerships with the international community and countries in the world with which it has mutual interests and goals. Those dimensions of U.S. defense strategy become more important bearing in mind the protracted conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the legitimacy of those operations.

Key Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) initiatives in this mission area include:

- Strengthen and institutionalize general purpose force capabilities for security force assistance;
- Enhance linguistic, regional, and cultural ability;
- Strengthen and expand capabilities for training partner aviation forces;
- Strengthen capacities for ministerial-level training; and
- Create mechanisms to expedite the acquisition and transfer of critical capabilities to partner forces.⁹

Understanding BPC requires knowledge of some other terms as well. Security cooperation is defined by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency's (DSCA) website as activities conducted with allies and friendly nations to:

- Build relationships that promote U.S. interests;
- Build allied/friendly nations capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations; and
- Provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access.¹⁰

Security Assistance is defined by DSCA as a subset of security cooperation activities consisting of activities and a group of programs, authorized by law, to provide defense articles and services in support of national policies and objectives. The leading agency for realization of those programs is the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

The main Security Cooperation programs which are being conducted with the Montenegrin Ministry of Defense in order to build the capacity of its armed forces are:

- The State Partnership Program (SPP), with state of Maine;

- Foreign Military Finance (FMF);
- International Military Education and Training (IMET);
- Participation in the regional Center for Security Studies, George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany;
- The Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP);
- Military to military familiarization events;
- Participation in PfP exercises;
- Service Academy attendance;
- Warsaw Initiative Fund (WIF) activities.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of Montenegro

Cooperation between the U.S. Department of Defense and the Ministry of Defense of Montenegro began several weeks after the independence of Montenegro, when U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visited Montenegro in June 2006. That was a very strong signal for the beginning of cooperation. Several months after that, in December 2006, LTG Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau and MG John Libby, Maine National Guard The Adjutant General (TAG) visited Montenegro and initiated the participation of the Montenegrin MoD in the State Partnership Program – SPP. In May 2007 the President of Montenegro Mr. Filip Vujanovic paid an official visit to the U.S.A. and signed an agreement regarding cooperation between the Maine National Guard and Armed Forces of Montenegro within the SPP.

The first U.S. Defense Attaché to Montenegro was appointed in July 2007, when he established a Defense Attaché Office in the newly accredited American Embassy in Podgorica. Security assistance activities were initially managed with the support of the

Office for Defense Cooperation based in Belgrade, Serbia. In February 2009 the U.S. Department of Defense opened the Bilateral Affairs Office at the Montenegrin Ministry of Defense building, appointing a Bilateral Affairs Officer from the Maine National Guard. That office was very important in expanding and improving cooperation, because activities could be coordinated on a daily basis with personal contact. Finally, in January 2010 the U.S. Government opened the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) in Montenegro, which was located in the MoD building.

Bilateral Defense Consultations (BDC) are a type of interaction conducted on an annual basis, alternating meeting locations one year in the U.S.A. and the next year in Montenegro. These consultations are meetings between U.S. and Montenegro senior defense officials, representatives from the Ministry of Defense and the General staff of the Armed Forces of Montenegro, and officials from U.S. DoD, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff (J5), USEUCOM representatives, National Guard, State Department and both Embassies. The objectives of the consultations are to review activities from the previous period and to set the priorities and goals for the next period in the different areas of cooperation. The conclusions drawn serve as a basis for the next period's plan of cooperation.

The annual plan of activities covers several areas of bilateral cooperation, including the State Partnership Program, IMET, CTFP, PfP exercises, etc.

The State Partnership Program

As Maine and Montenegro look to the future in their partnership, the vision remains to establish and sustain an enduring relationship to promote national objectives, stability, partner capacity, better understanding, and trust.¹¹

EUCOM's current-day SPP began in 1993 and evolved from the Joint Contact Team Program that was initially launched in Europe as a political and military outreach initiative for new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.¹² This program connects U.S. states with partner countries for the purpose of supporting the security cooperation objectives of the Combatant Commander. The SPP supports U.S. national interests and security cooperation goals by engaging partner nations via military, socio-political and economic conduits at the local, state and national level.¹³ The SPP activities support the Combatant Commander's Theater Campaign Plan and the U.S. Ambassador's mission strategic resource plans.

Some of the areas of cooperation within the SPP are:

- Emergency management and disaster response;
- Leadership and NCO development;
- Medical capacity development;
- Peacekeeping operations;
- Support for the Armed Forces in reaching NATO MAP partnership goals.

Cooperation between the Maine National Guard and the Armed Forces of Montenegro within SPP started in October 2007 with 10-15 activities per year. As MG Libby stated in an interview with the newspaper *Common Defense Quarterly*, the partnership was created to: "advise the Montenegrin Armed Forces on its transition from a conscript to an all-volunteer force; develop a professional non-commissioned officer corps; assist in the development of English language skills; develop a system to enhance emergency response for civil emergencies and search and rescue operations."¹⁴

The program started with military to military activities. Those activities were conducted in several different ways: visits of Mobile Training Teams from the Maine National Guard (NG), common unit exercises and training, familiarization visits of the Montenegrin representatives to the Maine NG units and barracks, and visits of the Maine NG TAG to Montenegro and Montenegrin Chief of the General Staff to Maine. All those activities were very helpful to the newly established AFM and provided support at a crucial time at the beginning of its formation. One of the most important benefits of those activities was the support of the Maine NG to the preparation of the AFM units deploying to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. For the young and inexperienced members of the AFM in that period, that kind of support was very important in all its phases: training, equipping, establishing the regulations for participation in the mission and support to the families of the soldiers deployed in the theater.

At the same time, cooperation in the field of civilian-military activities was also developed, with a focus on cooperation in response to crises and emergency situations. Cooperation began between the Maine NG emergency agency and the Agency for Emergency Situations from the Montenegrin Ministry of Interior. The next step in cooperation within the framework of SPP is to potentially develop civilian-civilian activities in the areas of economy, education and tourism.

Areas of cooperation between the Maine National Guard and the Montenegrin AF and other institutions are defined during the annual BDC, based on the needs and requirements of Montenegro.

How can cooperation within SPP be improved in the future? The established relationship between the Maine National Guard and Armed Forces of Montenegro is very important and useful in building the capacities of the AFM in the long term. Cooperation in all areas should be continued and intensified, with a focus on military-military and civilian-military activities. In my opinion, the next step in the relationship should be common participation in the ISAF or some other future Peace Support Mission. That common participation would make the relationship stronger and the AFM could benefit from cooperation with the trained and experienced personnel from the Maine NG.

Foreign Military Financing/Foreign Military Sales (FMF/FMS)

“Foreign Military Financing (FMF), the U.S. government program for financing through grants or loans the acquisition of U.S. military articles, services, and training, supports U.S. regional stability goals and enables friends and allies to improve their defense capabilities.”¹⁵ FMF is another tool for the Building Partnership Capacity. The Department of State allocates funds (USC Title 22 authority) for allies, partners and friends, the U.S. Congress appropriates FMF funds and the Department of Defense executes the program through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). “Title 22 funds are appropriated to the State Department, which often transfers them to DoD, which in turn manages and executes most security assistance programs.”¹⁶ The program is managed by the country team in the U.S. Embassy, led by the Defense Attaché as a Senior Defense Official and Chief of the Office of the Defense Cooperation as the person in charge of managing the FMF program.

Priorities for using FMF funds are defined by the Ministry of Defense of Montenegro, in cooperation with the U.S. country team. So far, Montenegro used these

funds to equip the units which are still currently deployed in the ISAF mission. FMF funds were used to purchase personal body armor systems, medical trauma kits, collective protection equipment, and communication equipment. Current funds are allocated for the equipment necessary for national level maritime surveillance systems, which will be integrated into both regional and NATO surveillance systems to deliver a common picture of the Montenegrin maritime area.

The administrative procedures for using FMF funds are very complicated and require detailed knowledge from the persons involved in the process both from the Montenegrin and U.S. side. After determining priorities and requirements, the Montenegrin MoD submits a Letter of Request (LOR) to the ODC, with the list of requested equipment. The Chief of the ODC forwards that LOR to DSCA, which after careful review approves (or disapproves) the request and responds to the Montenegrin side through a Letter of Acceptance (LOA). When the Montenegrin MoD confirms the LOA, the equipment is then made ready to be delivered to the Montenegrin side.

Foreign Military Sales (FMS) is another Security Assistance program. DSCA defines FMS as a “the government-to-government method for selling U.S. defense equipment, services, and training. Responsible arms sales further national security and foreign policy objectives by strengthening bilateral defense relations, supporting coalition building, and enhancing interoperability between U.S. forces and militaries of friends and allies.”¹⁷ An advantage of this program is the opportunity of purchasing the equipment at the same price and under the same conditions as the U.S. Armed Forces. Foreign governments don’t deal directly with the producer; instead DSCA serves as a

facilitator and provides support, training and infrastructure construction. FMS also offers different kind of services, not just equipment.

This program could be of great help in the process of building the capacities and interoperability of the AFM. In the past, the Montenegrin MoD used FMS cases for providing the services (Blanked Order Training), with a supplement for education and training in other programs. In accordance with the long-term plan for equipping the AFM, and in view of the limited available resources due to the current economic situation, FMS could be a great source for purchasing the equipment required by AFM units.

International Military Education and Training (IMET)

As defined by the DSCA, “the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program is a low cost, key funding component of U.S. security assistance that provides training on a grant basis to students from allied and friendly nations.”¹⁸ IMET is one of the most beneficial programs for the professional development of the Montenegrin officers and NCOs. It includes training activities conducted by the DoD at approximately 2,000 different courses at 150 military schools and installations. Funding is appropriated annually by the Department of State, and is managed by the DSCA and in the country team by the Chief of the ODC. The objectives of the IMET program are to “expose students to the U.S. professional military establishment and the American way of life, including amongst other things, U.S. regard for democratic values, respect for individual and human rights and belief in the rule of law.”¹⁹

At the beginning of implementation of the IMET program, the main challenge was the lack of English language skills among young Montenegrin officers and NCOs. The priority at the beginning was to improve those skills by conducting language courses

both in Montenegro and abroad. In 2009 under the FMS and IMET program an English language laboratory was formed in the AFM and now the number of officers and NCOs with acceptable knowledge has significantly improved. The focus in IMET activities is education of the Montenegrin officers at all levels of schooling (junior, intermediate and senior). As previously mentioned, this is important because Montenegro doesn't have a institution for officer education, having lost those facilities upon declaring independence. Priorities are defined in cooperation with AFM officials and the U.S. country team, and seats in the schools are allocated in accordance with their availability and USEUCOM's priorities in fulfilling the Theater Campaign Plan.

Participation in PfP exercises

Other programs in which the AFM is taking an active part are the USEUCOM led and supported PfP exercises. Participation in these exercises enables the officers and NCOs of the AFM to improve their capabilities in working in the international environment, learn standards and procedures, improve their English language skills and improve the interoperability of the units. The most important exercises are:

MEDCEUR (Shared Resilience). "MEDCEUR is an annual "in the spirit of Partnership for Peace Joint Chiefs of Staff sponsored regional/multilateral exercise. MEDCEUR provides training and operational experience to medical personnel from partner nations."²⁰ Realization of the MEDCEUR exercise supports training of the AFM in the area of the second mission of the AFM, providing support to civil institutions during crises and natural or man-made disasters. The MoD of Montenegro hosted the exercise in 2010, with the largest number of the participants that have taken part in any exercise conducted in Montenegro

The Immediate Response. Exercise is conducting in Croatia, with participants from armed forces from the region and PfP members. The aim of the exercise is to increase the interoperability of units, improve capabilities in NATO led COIN (counter-insurgency) operations, and improves cooperation between participating armed forces.

Combined Endeavor. “COMBINED ENDEAVOR is Europe's preeminent Command, Control, Communications, and Computer systems exercise preparing international forces for multinational operations.”²¹ The mission of the exercise is to “Prepare military coalition forces to deploy in support of multinational crisis response operations through collaborative planning, training, testing and integrating of fielded national military command, control, communications, and computer (C4) systems” and to develop “interoperable tactics, techniques, procedures, and published standards in a closed coalition network environment that is responsive to dynamic operational requirements.”²² Members of the AFM are active participants in all phases of the preparation of the exercise, and the Montenegrin MoD traditionally hosts the Final Planning Conference (FPC) for the exercise with more than 400 participants. Montenegro should host the Main Operation Site for the exercise 2017, with more than 1,700 expected participants.

All the above mentioned exercises support building the capacities of the AFM and its missions. In addition to these programs, other activities in the areas of cooperation are the education of AFM officers at the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Regional Center for Security Studies), and in cooperation with U.S. Service Academies. Montenegro currently has two midshipmen at the Naval

Academy in Annapolis, and is invited to nominate candidates for the U.S. Military Academy West Point and U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

Programs of cooperation between the AFM and U.S. Department of Defense support the realization of Montenegro's Partnership Goals. The Defense Department can formally link planned activities in support of 32 of the 51 total Partnership Goals in the current Annual National Plan. The third Annual National Plan, expected to be adopted in September 2012 will hopefully have the same level of integrated support previously provided by the US Department of Defense.

Conclusion

During his recent visit to Montenegro, USEUCOM Commander Admiral James Stavridis praised the country "for the professional military cooperation and excellent support to the NATO peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan".²³ He also stated that progress toward NATO membership has been made and that "Militarily, they're ready to go," but that the decision will be made by NATO's political leadership.

Montenegro remains fully committed to fulfilling its tasks and requirements toward NATO integration. The best example to date may be the recent deployment of the AFM team within the US – Adriatic charter (A5) initiative to the police school in Kabul, Afghanistan. Montenegrin officers and NCOs assigned to Kabul will be part of a regional unit, which consists of most of the Western Balkan countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia. The mission proves to the international community that the Balkan countries can participate in global peace efforts, instead of remaining consumers of peace support forces that they have been in the recent past. Regional cooperation was immediately recognized by the Government of Montenegro as the best approach to collective defense security issues upon declaring

independence. The international cooperation inherent in the combined Balkan participation in the Afghan Police Academy demonstrates that Montenegro has evolved its security structures and capabilities to match the government's regional security objectives.

Without any doubt, support in increasing Montenegro's Armed Forces capacities, capabilities and interoperability through various security assistance programs will enable Montenegro to continue to be a reliable partner in future global peace initiatives.

Endnotes

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